The COMMONWEAL

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Yalta and Poland

LAST WEEK we remarked that the greatest amount of controversy over the Yalta statement would be provoked by its "solution" of the Polish question. We, ourselves, do not view this as by any means the most important aspect of the Yalta agreement. Nor as the most important aspect subject to serious criticism. What disturbs us the most about the entire policy line of the Big Three is their seeming tendency toward an assumption of world hegemony. If this is in fact the intention, then we shall be confronted with a world in which small states will in substance be feudal appanages of the most powerful country in their neighborhood. For the nations of the world of their own free will to curtail their sovereignty is one thing—and a desirable thing. For the big powers to retain their full sovereignty and force their lesser neighbors to give up theirs is dangerous and bad. And a second fault in such an arrangement is that it provides no guarantee whatever against war within the Big Three itself. Yet there is always the hope that in the course of time this Big Three hegemony may demonstrate its own internal dangers, and a better solution—along the lines advocated in last week's COMMONWEAL by Don Sturzo—will grow out of the imperfect pattern so far perceptible.

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We were quite right in our assumption, however, that the hottest criticism would be directed against the Polish "settlement." And much of this criticism is, we believe, irresponsible. Americans must understand how to view and appraise such matters, if we are not to revert to an isolationism of despair. No responsible opinion pretends that what was decided at Yalta concerning Poland represents a great triumph of right over wrong, of absolute justice. It does not. Yet the decision might well have been worse. Clearly Stalin made two concessions in this connection. Both concessions may, of course, turn out to be nugatory. But if we start out by assuming that Russia has no intention of sticking to her agreements, we might just as well abstain from all conferences and from all attempts to achieve unity among the Big Three. The first concession was to admit in principle that the government of Poland should be built on a broader base than that of the Lublin group. The second concession regarded Germany and consisted in Russia's shelving her plan to set up a German Lublin Committee headed by the captured Junker generals.

Now to refer to the Polish "settlement" as "Big Three Cast Lots for Poland; Russia Is Given Her Share," as one very prominent Catholic weekly paper has shockingly done, is to give as false an impression as is given when "liberal" journals indicate that this "solution" is a triumph of ideals. It is neither. It is a compromise in the interests of unity, and like all compromises it involves both justice and injustice. What has been done territorially is this: Russia has been given an area (and by no means a "most valuable part" of Poland, as this same Catholic paper describes it) in which Poles constituted a minority. Poland is promised an area of Germany in which Poles will likewise constitute a minority—an even smaller minority. The heart of Poland—its most populated and fertile and richest areas, except for oil—where Poles are in the great majority, remains untouched.

The proper way to judge a compromise of this sort is from two points of view. What alternative was there to the compromise? And what would be the price of refusing the compromise? It has been an adamantine part of Russian policy, since 1939 at least, that her Western frontier should roughly approximate the Curzon Line. It was because England and France quite properly *at that time* refused to agree to this, before the outbreak of the war, that Stalin made his alliance with Hitler—who had no qualms about Polish rights. When Germany later invaded Russia, and Russia was in desperate straits, a solution of this problem better than the Yalta solution was made a part of the first draft of the Anglo-Soviet Pact. Because our State Department would not agree, this portion of the Pact was dropped. Now,

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Russia being in a vastly superior bargaining position, we are presented with what is admittedly a less desirable arrangement. Yet Russia could have demanded even more, and it is doubtful whether either Roosevelt or Churchill would in the long run have felt themselves justified in refusing to accept worse terms. It is inconceivable that Russia would have accepted much less than she did. Hence the alternative to what was done at Yalta was almost certainly something even less acceptable. Suppose, however, that we were to refuse the Yalta "solution." Russia, being on the spot, would remain on the spot, and the only way in which we could make effective any other solution would be with our own armed might. If those who protest so loudly against what was done are willing to assume the full responsibility of their protest, they must be willing to advocate that we go to war with Russia if Russia insists on the Curzon Line. Is any American seriously willing so to advocate? Our ancestors, at least, were logical enough to know that they had to say "Fifty-four Forty *or Fight!*"

Failure of UNRRA

POSSIBLY the most ominous of all present portents is the fact—which is admitted all round—that the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration has failed to function to any degree in the liberated areas of Europe. And this despite the most urgent human need. The reasons are manifold. Primary among them is nationalism. Russia has consistently blocked the operation of UNRRA in the areas liberated by her armies in Poland, the Balkans and elsewhere. The United States has apparently preferred to send material through the Foreign Economic Administration as a part of lend lease, where obligations directly to this country would be incurred and much less elaborate accounting is required. The French, Belgian, Dutch and Norwegian governments prefer to administer relief directly.

The personnel of UNRRA has not itself been very helpful. For, according to its setup, the governments of the liberated territories must first request aid from this international agency and the Allied command must sanction it. Apparently UNRRA operatives have been all too ready to sit at their desks awaiting requests for aid when they might have been vigorously requesting permission to begin rendering the aid which is so badly needed. They have not been sufficiently aware that general staffs have other matters than civilian relief as their prime concern. Rumors that squads of American social workers were to descend upon the liberated areas and the knowledge that UNRRA personnel was some 95 percent Anglo-American were hardly reassuring.

There are two critical aspects to this tragic failure of the UNRRA. Obviously the plight of the starving, disease-ridden, homeless millions is the first consideration. If UNRRA won't work, it should be supplanted by some other system which is responsible and of an over-all character. But if the United Nations cannot cooperate on the relatively simple task of immediate relief, how much can be expected of their plans to establish and maintain a just peace?

Argentina at Mexico City

GERMANY'S impending defeat and the economic assistance the United States can extend or withhold undoubtedly explain the Farrell government's current deflection toward more democratic tendencies. There are also such elements as the eagerness of Colonel Perón to get himself elected President to account for his reputed plan to run on a pro-US platform. For he does not wield the power which has been erroneously ascribed to him in the North American press, but is beholden to officers of lesser rank of the Buenos Aires garrison. Colonel Perón has the earmarks of an opportunist without fixed sympathies.

Argentina's military preparations and official adherence to fascist-type theories are said to be continuing, but the Foreign Office has sent Germany a sharply worded note demanding the release of sixteen diplomats who are to be exchanged, the pro-nazi daily of Buenos Aires has been definitively suppressed and "pro-democratic" professors restored to their teaching posts. The picture is slightly confused as Argentina stands before her peers, unrepresented.

It is well to recognize the limits to possible action on the part of the twenty American republics assembled. A sharply worded general resolution on Argentine non-cooperation would be as far as the delegates can go. Few of the Latin American nations are in any position to censure Argentina for dictatorship, failure to guarantee individual liberties or other matters of internal governance. Nor should the United States urge them to be hypocritical enough to do so. Indeed if Argentina eventually, by dint of a realistic appraisal of circumstances, should provide sufficient evidence of a willingness to cooperate positively in the war effort and desist from arming to the teeth, there would seem to be little reason for withholding any longer recognition of whatever régime is then in power.

The great danger for us in the Mexico City meeting, whether as regards Dumbarton Oaks or Argentina, is that we shall attempt to abuse our relatively greater power and the potentialities of our economic assistance to our southern neighbors. Our case for the kind of world we want is good, but we can vastly jeopardize our ideals for this hemisphere by trying to railroad things through.

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Terror Bombing

THERE is no *perhaps,* or *maybe,* or *it is reported,* or *it is authoritatively stated;* it is as official as the AP knows how to make it, so that here it is, part of it, as carried in the New York *Herald Tribune,* February 18, 1945:

> Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force, Paris, Feb. 17.—The Allied air chiefs have made the long awaited decision to adopt deliberate terror bombing of German population centers as a ruthless expedient to hasten Adolf Hitler's doom. . . .
>
> The Allied view is that bombardment of large German cities creates immediate need for relief. This is moved into the bombed areas both by rail and road, and not only creates a traffic problem, but draws transport away from the battle front. Evacuation of the homeless has the same result.
>
> Reconnaissance has shown that the best way to create road bottlenecks through key cities is to topple buildings into the street. . . .
>
> The decision may revive protests from some Allied quarters against "uncivilized warfare," but they are likely to be balanced by satisfaction in those sections of Europe where the German air force and the nazi V-Weapons have been responsible for the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians by tens of thousands.
>
> The reaction of the Germans . . . is expected to be a new outburst of violent words. . . .

There will not be any violent words on this occasion on this page. All the best violent words were used up long ago when week after week the question of "indiscriminate" bombing was argued, and the question of "area" bombing was argued, so that there are no violent words left to argue the question of "deliberate terror bombing." You could argue about all the steps which led to terror bombing, but now that terror bombing is the adopted policy there is nothing left to argue about or for. You could argue when people said that you lied and that there was no indiscriminate bombing but only precision bombing—even at night and through clouds, because of our instruments—you could argue when people said that you lied and that the damage to Italian towns would probably be not very great and that the passage through Italy was the quickest road to Berlin; you could argue when people said you lied and that all we did was proper, necessary and high-minded; but you cannot argue when people say that you have always spoken the truth. You cannot argue with people who say how right you have been and that it is quite true that airplanes started fighting each other with the pilots shooting pistols at each other in the air and then they found out that they could drop bombs and they dropped bombs on bridges and railways and, tactically, on enemy units; then on war factories, then on any factories, then on the houses of the workers who worked in the factories, then on entire industrial areas, then, on residential areas, on the ports and then on anything near the ports and then anywhere at all. Step by step you argued with people who said you lied—about the destruction in Italy, the destruction in France, the destruction in Germany. But you cannot argue any more when they say certainly in German, in good English translated from the German, when they say certainly this is deliberate terror bombing, this is a ruthless policy, when they say certainly it took a long time to come, it has been "long-awaited," but you were right when you saw that it was coming and now it is here and you can shut your face.

To ask for silence is to ask too much. But it is the end of the argument, all right.

The Stukas screamed down over the French roads with Thérèse Bonney photographing the pale, lost children huddled in the ditch, the horse lying in the road with swollen belly and its legs out stiff, and then the book was published in America and we remember it because it had the best of the photographs, but there were thousands of photographs in all the papers and when we looked at the photographs we said that the Germans. . . . And it was not only the photographs; all the writers were hard at work and it was almost impossible not to think that what they described was pitiful, and we said that the Germans. . . . And of course it was not that way only in France; there were the roads in Poland, in Russia—it was very terrible in Greece—the Belgian roads, and we said that the Germans. . . .

But now we know that Germans were working according to one of the simple little rules formulated by Supreme Headquarters (theirs) and now issued by Supreme Headquarters (ours). "Evacuation of the homeless" creates "a traffic problem."

London, and everything that happened; Rotterdam, and everything that happened to Rotterdam; the cities of Europe destroyed by the Germans—and for a long time we wondered how such things could happen. The Italian cities, the German cities destroyed by our planes—we may have wondered about that destruction also and whether anything would be left standing in Europe and whether the peoples of Europe would find any homes in which to live if ever they ceased wandering along the roads. But now we do not wonder any more about what the Germans ruined and what we are ruining. We do not wonder or argue about the past or about the present or about how to win the war without making Europe a desert. We know now that the sum of the angles of any triangle . . . and that "the best way to create road bottlenecks through key cities is to topple buildings into the street." Easy things to know once you think of them and formulate them, or someone else formulates them for you. This now has been done. And so this is the war as the war is now and there is no more arguing about it.

C. G. PAULDING.

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The Portent of Stresemann

What he meant and means for Germany

Felix E. Hirsch

FIFTEEN years ago, when Gustav Stresemann yielded in his heroic struggle with death, not only a large majority of his own people mourned, but the whole world felt the greatness of the loss. "I hold that Germany has never had a wiser or a more courageous adviser." With this sentence Lord D'Abernon, long British ambassador in Berlin and the most powerful foreign diplomat under the Weimar Republic, concluded his appraisal of Stresemann's personality in the third volume of his famous diary, and Sir Austen Chamberlain, Stresemann's intimate associate in the Locarno policy, acclaimed him as "a great statesman, a loyal partner and a true friend of peace."

The first shadow fell on Stresemann's memory when his "diaries, letters and papers" were published in the early thirties. The selection of the material to be included in these three volumes had been left to well-meaning persons, who, however, were dilettantes in the field of historical editing. They did a signal disservice to the cause of international understanding by their incompetence and lack of tact. It was due to them that doubts were cast on Stresemann's sincerity in his dealings with the statesmen of the Western democracies; one or another of his papers, uncritically taken by itself alone, tended to support such charges. But this first wave of criticism died quickly down, since there were still enough witnesses willing and able to testify to Stresemann's burning desire to establish a lasting era of peace in Europe.

It is only natural that the present war should have given rise to a school of thought which tends to link the criminal ruthlessness of Hitler's diplomacy to faults of his predecessors. To this group of historians and writers Germany appears "the aggressor throughout the ages," to quote the title of an English publication; and a recent American book is called "The Thousand-Year Conspiracy; Secret Germany Behind the Mask." No wonder that Stresemann also has come in for stern reappraisal. The year 1944 alone brought forth at least three serious attacks which gravely questioned his honesty as an international statesman.[1] There would be no hope of ever having any real peace in the Old World if it could be proved that the only German statesman who won the Nobel Peace Prize and who was generally believed to be a "good European," was merely a front for the sinister tendencies of the German General Staff, and that all of his protestations of sincerity were hollow phrases cleverly designed to deceive his colleagues in Paris and London. It is for this reason that I feel obliged to come to the defense of Stresemann and to try briefly to sketch the true picture of this maligned statesman.

As I search through my memories of Gustav Stresemann from the time I first listened to a speech of his, sometime in 1917, four telling little episodes come to my mind. They somehow illustrate the character of the man and the long road he traveled in the short span of a decade. The first recollection is of a large meeting of the German People's Party in Berlin, perhaps half a year after the November revolution of 1918. Stresemann, harboring a romantic affection for the Hohenzollern monarchy almost to the end of his life, spoke glowingly of the great days of the Empire. With his very German predilection for quotations, he ended his address amidst roaring applause with the verse:

> Was vergangen, kehrt nicht wieder,
> Aber ging es leuchtend nieder,
> Leuchtet's lange noch zurück.[2]

That was Stresemann, a fiery leader of the opposition to the Weimar Republic and to the conditions of peace imposed by the Allies.

★

Seven years later a very different scene. In a private room of the German Stage Club (*Deutscher Bühnen-Klub*), Stresemann was sitting with a few friends whom he had invited for a bottle of champagne. Characteristically enough, of the four or five people who joined him all but one were journalists; I think there was one actor, but

[1] Fritz K. Bieligk "Stresemann: The German Liberals' Foreign Policy," London, 1944; George Boas, "Stresemann: Object Lesson in Post-War Leadership," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Summer 1944; Sumner Welles, "A Time for Decision," New York, 1944. The essay by Boas, a distinguished professor of philosophy, seems particularly unfortunate, since he writes in an apodictic fashion, although he lacks essential knowledge of European history.

[2] What's past, does not return,
But if it went down glowingly,
Its afterglow will last long.

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no government official present. Stresemann himself drank a *Berliner Weisse,* the old-fashioned beer specialty which his father used to sell. To his end, the minister remained modest in his tastes and proud to have risen, like Briand, from the lower bourgeoisie. The conversation continued to a late hour; Stresemann himself spoke very frankly, without pose. It was quite apparent that his recent experiences in politics had mellowed his judgment on world affairs as well as on home politics. He spoke enthusiastically about his friendship with the American ambassador, J. G. Schurman, and about the United States (which, by the way, he had visited before the first World War). The only trace of older political prejudices was an unfriendly comment on the Viennese Socialists.

Then, less than a year later, I saw Stresemann in Geneva on various occasions: at a meeting of the League Council, at a Press luncheon, and addressing the Plenary Assembly of the League of Nations. The party politician, who had turned into a German statesman, in Geneva's Hall of the Reformation, showed that he had become a forceful leader of world opinion and a pioneer of international peace: "Being, as we are, of all powers on the old continent of Europe in most need of security, in order to maintain an expanding nation on a diminished territory, it is our desire not merely to assist but to champion those efforts toward a common peace, to which task the League has now set its hand." The man who thus aroused the enthusiastic applause of his international audience seemed to be in full possession of his strength, a statesman who was just coming into his own. Two years later, another Stresemann greeted the assembled representatives of the German press in the Hague, where the final wrestling over the Young Plan took place: a man worn out from the struggle for his ideals of peace and equality. His pale face, his sad eyes, his heavy way of walking and his shrunken figure betrayed the torment that his body had undergone, and his faint attempt to joke with one of the journalists seemed almost pathetic. A few days after this press conference, I saw him for the last time. He was standing on the terrace of a Noordwijk hotel in the sunshine: there could be little doubt that death must soon claim this victim.

How different would the world look today, if Stresemann at that time had been able to withdraw from politics and go to Egypt for the full recovery which his physicians seem to have hoped would be produced by the North African climate. He might then have been back in good shape in time to become a candidate for the Presidency of the Reich, when Hindenburg's first term ended in 1932, and he might have saved his country from the disaster which befell it during the second term of the aged Field Marshal. But Stresemann had to return from the Hague to Berlin to finish his job on the Young Plan and to keep the German People's Party in line. It was on an October night, after he had once more, by a final superhuman effort, forced his own party representatives to listen to reason, that he died from a sudden stroke. Indeed, it had been a formidable task to talk the vastly cautious French into evacuating the Rhineland; but it was the fight with his own political "friends" that killed Stresemann. The late Dr. Koch-Weser wrote to me on this subject, a few weeks before his own death: "I often heard from Stresemann and observed when I was his colleague in the Cabinet, what an unbelievable effort he had to make in order to overcome the resistance within his own party against this foreign policy. Very often he came to cabinet meetings exhausted, because he had been under heavy attack by party committees. For whole days he could not go to his office, because his presence was indispensable at party gatherings."

★

Nobody can understand the personal tragedy of Stresemann unless he is familiar with the situation within Stresemann's own party. He had started out as a disciple of Friedrich Naumann, the most inspiring thinker among the German liberals at the turn of the century, the visionary who dreamed of emperor and working man joining hands. Then he had turned to a more realistic group, the National Liberals, and at an extraordinarily youthful age became a member of the Reichstag. The National Liberal Party, which once upon a time had been Bismarck's most powerful supporter in the unification of Germany, had lost much of its earlier strength, but was then still fairly representative of industry, commerce, and the academic world. Stresemann rose within the party rapidly due to his friendship with its leader, Ernst Bassermann, whom he succeeded upon his death. Having been a convinced liberal in home politics, he went into a certain eclipse when, during the first World War, he supported General Ludendorff unreservedly. For this reason the Democratic Party formed by various liberal groups shortly after the Armistice refused to admit him to any position of prominence—an unforgivable mistake. It robbed the new party of the ablest orator and organizer it could have found; after a few prosperous years, the Democrats were doomed. But it also deprived Stresemann of the political company to which he properly belonged.

In the German People's Party, which he created after the Democrats had rebuffed him, he became more and more ill at ease. Only a few of its leading members shared his political philosophy and favored his program of European

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collaboration. The majority consisted of stubborn industrialists, such as Stinnes and Voegler, and of moderately reactionary civil servants and professors, who had little, if anything, in common with him. Just one example: when, at the Hague, he had spent his last ounce of strength to secure the evacuation of the Rhineland, the leader of the People's Party in the Reichstag, Herr Scholz, gave an address in Königsberg minimizing the achievement and pointing to the dangers of a "weak" foreign policy. "The sick man trembled, when he spoke to me about it," said Koch-Weser reporting his last talk with Stresemann. This final conversation, by the bye, was devoted to discussing plans for founding a new liberal party, which would offer Stresemann a better platform for promoting his ideals. The moment for embarking on such an enterprise might not have been very auspicious; probably the time had passed when a strong forward-looking party of the bourgeoisie could have been formed. Too many of the "better people" were already turning for their salvation to the nationalist right. But the fact that Stresemann, during the last weeks of his life, pondered such a party realignment indicates how deeply he felt he had lost his political home.

As we examine the six years of Stresemann's statesmanship (1923-1929), Locarno seems to be the climax of his career. But another period of his life deserves no less respect: his luckless Chancellorship in the fall of 1923. How he had longed to be in Bismarck's place! But in those trying hundred days Gustav Stresemann passed through the whole Inferno of German politics. He was obliged to abolish the "passive resistance" against the French in the Rhineland, without being able to extract any concession in exchange from Poincaré; only a statesman whose patriotism was above reproach could dare to accept this defeat without being swept away by nationalist feeling. The Reichsmark went down to an infinitesimal part of its value, and inflation threatened to envelop the whole structure of German economy. There was a growing separatist tendency in the Rhineland; in Munich the Hitler movement raised its ugly head and the Bavarian government seemed temporarily on the point of joining it; in Saxony and Thuringia communism was on the march, not to speak of minor troubles elsewhere with the "Black Reichswehr." In such a time any man with less vision and less optimism might easily have given up; but Stresemann never showed more fortitude than in those days of disaster, and his courageous attitude was in time rewarded.

The government that Stresemann headed represented the "Great Coalition," that is, it included Social Democrats, Catholic Center, Democrats and People's Party; the same combination was in office at the time of his death. In a country which never until 1933 had experienced one-party rule, the "Great Coalition" was probably the best set-up one could hope for; it included all parties willing to cooperate within the framework of the Weimar Constitution. Unfortunately the four parties forming the "Great Coalition" were rarely prepared to sit in the government of the Reich at the same time. During most of his tenure as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Stresemann, therefore, was obliged to line up majorities for his policy wherever he could get them. To the casual observer Stresemann might seem to have been an opportunist, because at times he had to collaborate with the Nationalists, but never did he abandon his convictions on European cooperation in exchange for obtaining their votes. "He adhered steadfastly to beliefs, when they were not only inconvenient, but damaging," says Lord D'Abernon.

It is with this in view that we should examine Stresemann's often criticized letter to the former Crown Prince William, written less than a month before the Locarno Conference. Stresemann had been on friendly terms with the heir to the Hohenzollern throne since the last years of the Empire. He had enabled him to return from his exile, and he continued to cultivate their cordial relationship even at a time when he had ceased to be an active monarchist. D'Abernon notes in March, 1926, that "Stresemann is still an enthusiast about the Crown Prince: he declares that on several occasions lately he has shown great wisdom and moderation. . . . I asked if the Crown Prince took a considerable interest in politics and exercised any big influence. Stresemann said 'yes.' He regards the Crown Prince as sensible politically." At a moment when a sworn monarchist like Hindenburg had become President, against Stresemann's wishes, and when a coalition including the German Nationalists was ruling the Reich, it certainly was to the advantage of the Minister of Foreign Affairs to have the moral support of the former Crown Prince. It goes without saying that he would write exposés for this particular correspondent in a vein different from his public pronouncements. But his remark that "German policy . . . will be one of finesse and the avoidance of great decisions," regrettable though it may be, certainly does not substantiate the charge of duplicity. I wish that either Stresemann had not used this somewhat objectionable phrase, or that the editors of his papers had not published this specific document. But it seems juvenile to present the one word *finassieren* as "proof" that Stresemann did not take seriously his whole Locarno policy.[3]

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[3] See the excellent essay "Was Stresemann Sincere?" by Rudolf Olden in the *Contemporary Review* for May, 1935.

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There is, however, another point in this note to the former Crown Prince which deserves examination. Stresemann utters "a warning against any Utopian idea of flirting with Bolshevism." He is willing to come to an understanding with the Russians, but he does not favor the "Eastern orientation" that Count Brockdorff-Rantzau and some Reichswehr generals were then espousing. Stresemann, basically, looked to the West for salvation. Since the United States was then in its spell of isolationism, most of the guidance had to come from London; for good reasons the Ambassador of His Majesty exerted a tremendous influence in the Wilhelmstrasse. The cherished relation with Briand eventually proved full of disappointment, especially after the romantic meeting at Thoiry had led to no visible consequences.

Yet, and in the eyes of so competent an observer as Lord D'Abernon, there was no more definite objective in Stresemann's mind than "to bring about such a moderation of hostility between France and Germany as would permit European pacification." For this reason he risked his life when he was asked to be present at the formal signing of the Briand-Kellogg Peace Pact in Paris and for this reason he exhausted his strength in a lengthy interview with Poincaré (1928). But he had few illusions about the actual value of the Peace Pact; he foresaw then what others learned only later from painful experience, that no such pact could safeguard the world peace so long as it lacked proper implementation. "If I asked a murderer of tomorrow whether he approved of murder in principle, he would answer, 'No.' But will such a question prevent the murder? Still, it will be a good thing to have a pact. The more often men talk of peace, the sooner will they begin to think about it."[4]

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Why bother with Stresemann's policies today? Shortly after his death his own country abandoned the ideals for which he stood. His National Socialist successors scorn his methods; they have other diplomatic "recipes." But we hope the day may not be far off when the Ribbentrops and Rosenbergs will disappear from the Wilhelmstrasse and when an utterly defeated Germany will need new leadership. Such honest statesmanship as Friedrich Ebert, Walter Rathenau, Gustav Stresemann and Heinrich Brüning gave to Germany after her first great disaster can grow but slowly. The present Italian example shows that it is not enough to have the "old guard" of democratic politicians and some distinguished exiles take over after the dictatorship has collapsed (and Italy's problems seem almost minimal, compared with those looming on the German horizon). I am convinced that for several years to come the United Nations themselves will have to provide for German's central government. In time it may be possible to turn over local affairs to trustworthy citizens of the Reich. But there will be no reliable and capable native elements immediately available for the tremendous task of putting the whole country back on its feet. Finally, it must be said that of the republican politicians who quit Germany, only a few could render outstanding service, having now been separated from their home country for about a dozen years.

★

A new political "élite" may develop in Germany only after an extended process of reeducation and readjustment. It would be foolish to attempt any precise prediction as to whence this new leadership will come. To the unbiased observer it seems likely that the groups formerly identified with the Trade Unions and the Social Democratic Party will produce from their ranks some pilots of a new Germany. Certainly worth watching are also several of the brave men who risked their lives in their fight for the freedom of the Christian Churches; their heroism has been the only consoling feature, when we think of the black record of the twelve Hitler years. Thirdly, there may arise some useful leaders from the "non-political" civil service, from the professions and the business groups formerly connected with the liberal parties, and there may be even a few university professors, who have preserved their political integrity in the face of adversity. Finally, it would be unwise to abandon in advance all hope of reclaiming some of the younger element that fell under the spell of some aspects of National Socialism without participating in, or inwardly agreeing to, its barbarian pursuits. The example of Gustav Stresemann teaches us that an ardent nationalist may yet become an ardent champion of peace.

Against those who today attempt to minimize his merits and to question his sincerity and who then draw wrong conclusions from their false premises, I hold the testimonials of two Americans whose names are most intimately associated with the Stresemann era. In a recent letter one of them wrote me: "Dr. Stresemann impressed me as being one of the wisest and most open-minded and objective in his discussions of the many Germans whom I met in that period," and the other summarily said, "It will be leadership such as his [Stresemann's] that will be most essential to the postwar Germany."

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[4] Antonina Vallentin-Luchaire, "Stresemann," New York, 1931. This is still the most readable book about him, but she lacks a sense of historical perspective.

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A Little Lecture on American Poetry

Robert Lax

I

When Cousin Walter said
"I hear America singing"
The words he used were:
"I hear America singing"
& when Uncle Carl said
"The people, yes"
The way he said it was:
"The People, Yes!"

All of which would make you think
That Cousin Walter had better ears than anybody else,
& that Uncle Carl had been thinking of the people, no, for
a long time and suddenly thought:
The People, Yes!
But this is not this is not necessarily the case.

Because I too, from time to time,
have heard America singing;
And I have sometimes said the people yes,
and not infrequently: why the hell not?

And surely the people Walt heard
must have sung almost as much
as they do now,
And the midwestern people Carl
was thinking about
must be twice as peaceful and commendable
as the ones we shake out of our suits every night.

And besides, I should think Carl
could say a good word for the people,
When, after all, Saint Francis said
to the birds: Yes!
And to the wolf:

"Uh-huh."

II

Because, as a matter of fact, I hear the
whole world singing,
Not just with their souls either,
But with their mouths and their throats,
And tuning up their instruments,
Some of which are made of coconuts &
some of Plexiglass:
They play on the tenor sax, and tree drums,
vibraphones and the lemon-rind zither;
And so I mean it when I say
I hear the whole world singing.

I just stand still and in a while I hear them:
Sometimes they come along with tamborines and tubas
and play: Brighten the corner.
Sometimes they come with guitars and bass fiddles
and play: Para Vego Me Voy.

And sometimes it is I who am coming along
And they are sitting down
and playing: Don't get around much anymore.

And some of the songs they sing, I like,
& some of them get me sick;
But in any case,
I hear the whole world singing.

III

Now the question is not
whether the whole world is singing
or whether I like it,
Because I've already said that it is
& that I do, sort of;
But the more important question is
Whether what they're singing is much good,
and if it is,
whether there is anything that can be done
to make it better.

And the answer I think of right away is
that what most of them are singing about
isn't much good,
And that what they ought to do
is get something better to sing about.

They ought to sing more about birds,
More about spring,
More about the sky,
& even more about love;
They perhaps ought to sing
More about *dulce est et decorum*
pro patria mori
though I'm not sure I agree,
& not so much about Pepsicola.

(which reminds me,
perhaps illogically,
of a song a friend of mine
wrote called:
"Why doesn't somebody
write a song about business,
Why do they always sing
about love?")

They ought to sing more about
all good things.

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London Commentary

Greece — Socialized Medicine — Education

J. L. Benvenisti

MR. WALTER LIPPMANN'S "U. S. War Aims" has been a best seller in this country, but I suppose we have been rather too busy chatting about V2 and things like that for the obvious comment to be forthcoming. Peace, according to Mr. Lippmann, would be safeguarded by the organization of the world into large regions which are also strategically organized units. Since the two most important of these regions, the so-called "Atlantic Community" and "Russian Orbit," are a very long way off from one another and so cannot properly knock each other about, they are unlikely to fight (at least so Mr. Lippmann thinks), and if they do not do that they can more or less maintain peace over the rest of the world—assuming that they more or less want to maintain peace over the rest of the world.

Frankly, Mr. Lippmann's argument seems to me for various reasons a little unconvincing. But my real quarrel lies with his proposed organization of the Atlantic Community, which is to include the Americas, the greater part of the British Commonwealth, Britain and the countries on the western fringe of Europe. All this to form one watertight strategic system. There is undoubtedly something to be said for such an arrangement, for nearly all these countries have strong mutual sympathies based on their affinities of outlook, and in most cases the possibility of war between them can be ruled out. But from the British side of the Atlantic a grouping of this kind in which Russia is not organically included does not look quite so promising as it appears to do from New York.

The chief threat of aggression against which such a system is devised as a defense is, at the moment, the threat from Germany, and to counter that threat both the Russian and the Atlantic communities are, according to Mr. Lippmann, to bind themselves to stand guard over Germany for whatever time may be agreed. This means that the watch will be left to powers which have no real organic cohesion between them and people over here are tending to ask, "What would happen if Russia were to become alienated, indifferent or neutral?", and the answer to that question is as plain as mud. Germany would start something.

Now the chief difference between Britain and the US lies in the fact that whereas the US would certainly want to prevent Germany from finishing anything she started, Britain has a rather more pressing interest in seeing that she does not start anything at all. I do not think people in America realize sufficiently that if within the next generation Germany were given opportunity to re-arm and make a third bid for the mastery of Europe, Britain would be the first country to be attacked. Britain is the main obstacle to that mastery, and Germany has twice gambled on Britain remaining neutral, hoping thus to attain it on the cheap. Twice that gamble has led to disaster. She will not miscalculate a third time. Next time she will strike at the one country whose elimination would put all that she wants within her grasp, and her blow will be sudden, devastating, and—if she can make it so—mortal. She will then seek to confront the world with a *fait accompli* and will hope (vainly) that the United States will accept the situation. It is improbable that the United States will do anything of the kind, alliance or no alliance, but by the time they have come to her aid, Britain might well have passed through an ordeal from which she would never completely recover.

There is only one thing that can eliminate the possibility of that calamity. That is the presence on Germany's Eastern frontier of an overwhelmingly strong power, which would strike at her within an hour of any such attack. Under such conditions the German attack would never be made. In these circumstances it is understandable that a strong body of opinion over here should view an alliance with Russia, complete with regular staff talks and all the other elements of full strategic cohesion, as the fundamental of British policy, an arrangement that seems to me incompatible with the whole spirit of Mr. Lippmann's scheme.

Strongly as many people hold these views, and despite the fact that the British Government themselves have declared that the Anglo-Russian alliance is the keystone of the security system, it does not appear to be in this direction that British policy is proceeding, and precisely because British policy is proceeding in the very opposite direction, there is, as I shall show in a moment, a certain unkindness in some of the things which America has recently been saying about us. At

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the time of writing Britain is being severely criticized for her policy in Greece. She is accused of playing power politics, which seems to me a particularly childish accusation. Of course Britain is playing power politics. In the world as it is at present organized what other politics are there for her to play? Power politics is only a rude name for safeguarding your security, and the question is not whether Britain is playing power politics but the kind of power politics she is playing, and even if they are not precisely the kind of power politics that Mr. Lippmann wants her to play, they are certainly not the politics which Mr. Lippmann's critics here think she ought to play.

You will see this if you look at what is by many considered as the blackest part of the indictment, I mean the accusation made at the moment against Britain that she has got a sort of gentleman's agreement with Russia giving Britain a free hand in Greece and Russia a free hand in Poland. I have no positive evidence on this matter but incline to the view that since the Russians are quite obviously observing it like gentlemen, such a gentleman's agreement really does exist. The mistake that so many people make, particularly in America, is to treat this as proof that Britain is swinging into the Russian orbit, whereas in fact it is a proof of exactly the opposite. These delimitations of spheres of interest prove not that war between the two powers is inconceivable, on the contrary they prove that those powers are already beginning to regard each other as members of separate blocs between whom armed conflict is by no means inconceivable. Let the reader who doubts this search for any corresponding "gentleman's agreement" between Britain and America. He will not find one.

What it amounts to is that Britain is standing with her face towards Russia and her back towards Washington, and though turning your back on somebody is bad manners in social intercourse, it is a mark of confidence in international affairs. Is it really nice of Americans to respond to this gesture by kicking Britain in the pants?

And here is yet another point. There has been a tendency to say that Britain's policy in Greece has been undemocratic. Yet if democracy means free elections and parliamentary institutions Britain is certainly supporting these, because they are the natural framework for liberalistic capitalism which is the order under which Britain grew great. There is no doubt whatever in my mind that Britain wants democracy in Greece. What I am much more doubtful about is whether anybody else there wants it.

That aspect of the matter tends rather to be overlooked. Judging from conversations that I have had with Americans over here, the impression seems to prevail that the relations between Greece and Britain are merely a repetition on a rather smaller scale of those which obtained between George Washington and George III, save only that the British appetite for snobbery and flunkeydom has apparently grown with the centuries. We have, I gather, an inordinate craving for shop-soiled royalty, and our policy is entirely dictated by a lunatic passion for dotting redundant kings about all over the chessboard of Europe. I do not know why people believe this, but apparently they do, and it is really very difficult to explain anything if Americans persist in the view that we are a nation of halfwits governed by blithering idiots.*

In so far as we favor a certain kind of political set-up in other countries, it is something that so nearly resembles the so-called American way of life that the difference doesn't matter. The question is not whether the institutions which Britain appears to favor on the Continent are abhorrent to American conceptions of freedom and dignity. The question is whether the kind of institutions which are favored both by British and Americans are any longer to the taste of the peoples of Europe, and that, as I have already indicated, is a matter concerning which I am much more uneasy.

Thus there are many who believe (this view is shared by no less an authority than the *Economist*) that EAM really does, or at any rate did represent the overwhelming mass of the Greek people, and indeed it is very difficult to explain in any other way why the general strike called by EAM should have been so devastatingly successful. What these recalcitrant bodies in Europe really want is very difficult to define in so many words. To say that it is "Communism" is to simplify the matter out of all recognition. It is, I think, not so much a matter of machinery and constitutions as of values and atmospheres. It is above all an hostility to certain kinds of acquiescence and compromise. They may exaggerate the extent to which Britain and America stand for that kind of thing, but I know that many of them do think they stand for it.

★

I have to some extent been able to follow the discussions which have taken place in THE COMMONWEAL on the subject of State Medicine, and as the same debate is proceeding over here at an even more advanced and angrier stage, my own comment may be of some slight interest. Some time ago, as you are probably aware, the British Government put forward a scheme in White Paper form for a Public Health Service. By this service every conceivable medical and surgical facility that there is was to be made available

* All this of course does not imply that Britain would be averse to making use of a royal personage if that served the main purpose any more than America was deterred from using Darlan.

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without direct payment to every man, woman and child in the country. British doctors have declared their readiness to welcome a scheme which would prevent lack of means from debarring any person enjoying all the medical care they require. They are nevertheless violently hostile to the present proposals, and this despite the fact that under them private practice is to continue wherever people are willing to pay for it, and that many doctors would undoubtedly enjoy a higher measure of economic security.

The ground of the hostility is that the doctors see in the scheme the beginnings of a State-salaried medical service in which an ever increasing number of them would ultimately be driven to seek employment, and in so far as the danger is real I do not see how doctors could feel otherwise about it than they very obviously do.

The essence of the matter is surely very simple. A socialized State-run medical service may work satisfactorily in a fully socialized society, by which I mean a society in which the physical and mental well-being of the citizens takes precedence over all proprietary rights. It cannot work satisfactorily in any other kind of society. That is the point which advocates of a state medical service so often fail to grasp.

For instance, the anonymous author who wrote so thoughtfully on this subject in THE COMMONWEAL of last September poured ridicule on the American Medical Association's contention that a dictatorially run State Health Service is not consistent with good medical practice, "for if such a system be not compatible with good medical service, then our soldiers and sailors are inevitably receiving inadequate care, for the medical departments of the Army and Navy are dictatorial in the same sense. And from what we hear, the medical records of the Services in this war are excellent."

Surely it is obvious that the writer is proceeding on a false analogy. The medical service in the U. S. Forces is no doubt excellent. Why shouldn't it be? The U. S. Forces have a complete identity of interest with their doctors in maintaining their personnel in the highest condition of physical health. They cannot do their job if they fail in this. But the State, both in Britain and America, can and does get along very nicely with men and women dropping dead from disease all over the shop. Indeed, the less fuss is made when people drop dead like this, the more taxes it will save and the better pleased we all shall be. The reason why the issue of socialized medicine is now being raised in either of our countries is not that the State has any interest in keeping people well. It is that, doubtless owing to the lamentable wartime pampering of the working class, people are objecting to dropping down dead on quite so grandiose a scale. Surely it is obvious that the difference between the two sets of circumstances is radical, and that the attitude towards the doctor on the part of the authority concerned will be quite different in the one case to what it is in the other. In the case of the fighting forces medical care will be the maximum that can possibly be given. In the ordinary circumstances of civilian life it will be the minimum that the State can get away with. That minimum may be something better than many poor devils are getting at present, but I can well understand the more conscientious doctor objecting to a service which will inevitably place him in positions which are professionally intolerable.

For that is exactly what is bound to happen. Every doctor knows that ninety percent of his patients, whatever may be their superficial symptoms, are really suffering from only one disease—lack of money. As a private practitioner he does not usually tell them this, for that would generally amount to telling them they were incurable, but he knows it and there is nothing to prevent him telling them if he feels that way inclined. But as a State servant he cannot say that, for to tell a patient that he is simply suffering from lack of money is an implied criticism of the State which permits him to be needlessly poor. A doctor in that position must either pretend to be able to cure cases the only remedy for which he is forbidden to prescribe, or admit that he is a salaried quack drawing public money under false pretenses. Can one wonder at doctors refusing to be put in that predicament?

★

This matter of the combating of avoidable want, and not least the larger lunacy of Bretton Woods to which I lately devoted considerable space in these columns, have recently impelled me to go and have a look at some of our schools over here in order to try and find out what it was that they were up to in this business. It would be difficult to put into a single phrase just what I was looking for, but I suppose what I wanted to know was this. Are Britain's present day teachers giving the coming day generation a grasp at least of the main data of the problems which it will be their main task to try and solve. Are they causing their minds to be directed towards those problems? Are they—to use a phrase which I have lately hurled at more than one poor unsuspecting school-master—"making their children problem conscious?" It would be churlish and unjust to say that I have been disappointed in this. I have not been disappointed.

There is a tremendous stirring going on in British education at the moment, of which I may tell you some other time. I am concerned with it here because of a rather curious experience I underwent in the course of these more or less somnambulistic wanderings of mine. I was visit-

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ing a girls' High School and I am convinced that it was a very good school indeed, for the headmistress was a lady with a quick, witty and warmly sympathetic mind under whom it must have been a delight and a privilege to receive instruction. After our talk I was asked if I would like to meet the girls of the sixth form (corresponding to your twelfth grade or high school senior) and before I knew what had happened I was talking to about a dozen of them on the subject of unemployment and Sir William Beveridge's new plan for dealing with it, of which also I may write later, and kindred matters. During the course of my talk I happened to use quite casually a phrase about the banks manufacturing money out of nothing and my eager serious and very sympathetic little audience suddenly burst into shrieks of laughter. They thought I was joking and no doubt that they were expected to laugh. They had never heard the idea of bank-created credit, despite the fact that the phrase about "money being manufactured by the banking system" is today in common currency in serious financial journalism. It may have been, of course, rash on my part to assume so readily that girls at a High School would know its meaning, but please remember that this was an exceptionally good and up-to-date school, good by any standards, and if this kind of knowledge is not imparted here it is probably not imparted anywhere at all, and that seems to me a very significant thing for the whole democratic set-up. For we are dealing here, not with a failure of the schools to create mental alertness or stimulate the imagination, but of the omission from the curriculum of something which ought to be included in it if the function of the school is really to be a training for citizenship as British educational leaders quite sincerely say it is. You really can't understand the social process unless you have a working knowledge of the mechanism of money. Why is that knowledge not being generally imparted, either here or in America?

It is very difficult to answer that question. There is, I think, no conscious agency at work preventing these things from being taught, but there are nevertheless powerful vested interests in certain kinds of ignorance. I do not think our educators have quite woken up to that. They still believe that if there was anything in such matters as money which it was pressingly to the interest of every citizen to know, then those in whose province these matters lie would take the lead in spreading that knowledge—and that is where they are wrong.

One thing, however, seems clear. This combination of tactful hesitancy on one side with disingenuous reticence on the other seems to be a deep rooted characteristic of the great democracies. It is a fearful hindrance to the single-minded and purposive grappling with any great problem, and it is my belief that it is, among other things, that atmosphere and that kind of influence which the revolutionary movements in Europe are desperately trying to resist.

Communications

FLOWERS . . . BY V-MAIL . . .

Mariana Islands.

TO the Editors: Aloha and Ginger Leis to THE COMMONWEAL and J. F. Powers for that superb story in the November 10 (1944) issue. I cannot remember when I have ever been so fascinated by a short story. "The Trouble" is now making the rounds of my Squadron. It is something for all of us to think about. Let's have more stories by J. F. Powers!

CPL. GEORGE MANGINI.

AND BRICKBATS

Rapid City, S. Dak.

TO the Editors: You wrote in your issue of the ninth of this month: This issue of THE COMMONWEAL is not a normal issue. Right you are! I had to rub my eyes after reading it to make sure that I was not reading the Brooklyn *Tablet,* so staunchly and vigorously Catholic were two of the articles, instead of the usual anaemic brand of Catholicity served up by the Skillins, the Corts, the Maritains, the Justice Murphys, and their lily-livered ilk. If ever there was a ringing challenge of a champion of Catholic truth, surely it was in the defiant article of Mr. Walsh. Not since the days when Michael Williams had full control of your periodical has there been such sturdy Catholicity. Caught with his falsehood on him, the shrinking Señor had to take refuge behind the defense of personal insult—a defense that ill became him, since he had not been averse to insulting Eire and its doughty President, whose Catholicity is also manly and forthright.

Then Francis Stuart Campbell quite out-Caesared Caesar with his encyclopedic learning and sophistication contrasted with the affected intellectuality and liberal Catholicism, or Catholic Liberalism of THE COMMONWEAL and its henchmen. This issue was a very pleasant surprise, just as the omitted issue left a bad taste in the mouth after all the mealy mouthings of previous issues. Let us, the mere subscribers, have more of the former and less of the latter. REV. WILLIAM BOYD.

The Stage & Screen

The Stranger and *Signature*

THE WEEK deliveres two offerings beginning with an *S* (just like in lemon) and why on earth they weren't twisted together and stored away somewhere in someone's bottom drawer before reaching production, no

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one will ever know. Nineteenth-century murder mysteries both, they were only sometimes funny. As "Signature" had the grace to close after the second night, there is no sense in worrying it further, but I would like to remark momentarily its nature effects. Mounted, by Stewart Chaney, in Ol' Virginny, its wings were evidently crowded by hounds and katy-dids, all wonderfully articulate, and a large group of fireflies played through the air. These not only glowed and dimmed alternately throughou,t but took occasion to *explode* on cue, at the climax of the piece. An arrangement which I may say I have never seen before and never hope to again. As for "The Stranger," this relates the familiar adventures of Jack The Ripper, all action occurring offstage and subsequently lengthily discussed by the most motley group of zombies ever gathered into a Woman's Club anywhere, even in the London of '88. Contrived and silly, the piece also dishes up a selection of the theories *pro* and *con* the early Shaw, and provides everyone with an accent (cockney and otherwise), handled according to someone's imagination. Edouard Franz in the title rôle, and Perry Wilson as the girl who befriends him, deserve credit for their heroism. Stanley Ball's Constable is, as one would expect, all moustache. Boris Aronson's set is too good for the doings. Nothing more. (*At the Playhouse.*) KAPPO PHELAN.

Mona Smiled

AGAIN we have one of those weeks in which one man's joke is another man's boredom. Three new comedies are raising their supposedly funny heads. At *"Here Come the Co-Eds,"* I laughed and laughed. At *"Tonight and Every Night,"* I was interested and pleasantly entertained. And at *"The Three Caballeros,"* except for moments of Disney charm and humor, I was rather annoyed.

It is no secret that I am inordinately fond of the antics of Abbott and Costello, so anyone who accepts my recommendation for one of their pictures must keep this fact in mind. The last few A. and C. films have been pretty thin and the boys had difficulty in shining without material. But in "Here Come the Co-Eds," they burst forth in their best style. As caretakers at an exclusive and staid girls' college, Bud Abbott and Lou Costello have an opportunity to run riot, and they run. Of course this school, which includes a bevy of slick chicks and Phil Spitalny with his All Girl Orchestra among the faculty and students, is like no other school. Even so, the Chairman of the Board (Charles Dingle) has a right to be indignant at the flaunting of ivy-covered tradition. The comedians are mainly responsible for this flaunting, and their funniest scenes show Costello in a mess of dough, Costello being used as a dice cup after he swallows a pair of dice, Costello as a substitute player in the girls' basket ball game. Not even Donald Duck can express irritation as well as frustrated Costello when the oysters in the stew refuse to let him eat in peace. Peggy Ryan, who handles several good song-and-dance numbers, assists Abbott by being a foil for the Costello burlesquing and slapstick. She and Lou carry their clowning to new heights in the Jack Brooks-Edgar Fairchild song, "Let's Play House."

"Tonight and Every Night" is not really a comedy; it's sort of a cross between a light operetta and a musical comedy with dramatic undertones. Based on the play "Heart of a City," it tells the story of a theater in London that continues operation during the blitz. In the course of its show-must-go-on theme, the film manages to exhibit some excellent production numbers. Perhaps they are a little larger and fancier than would be staged in a war-time London theater, but they are not the incredible, overblown affairs that Hollywood likes to stick in musicals. Rita Hayworth and Janet Blair present well the good songs written by Sammy Cahn and Marlin Skiles; especially effective are "Cry and You Cry Alone," "For the Boy I Left Behind," and the film's title song. One of the picture's greatest assets is the dancing of Marc Platt, a newcomer in movies, who also shows he can act whenever the plot requires him to look longingly at Miss Hayworth. This plot, by the way, is the film's weakest point; and unfortunately the story is stretched until it becomes tiresome in its romantic episodes. Lee Bowman, doing the best he can with the colorless role of an RAF flier, finally wins Rita's love but does not succeed in persuading her to leave her business of entertaining war-harried Londoners and uniformed men. I wish Producer-director Victor Saville had omitted the silly scene in which Rita goes to Lee's apartment and discovers he's a wolf; and I also wish he could have quickened the film's pace. The photography, in good technicolor, is outstanding; and while this movie isn't entirely convincing, it does impress us again with what Londoners have been through.

"The Three Caballeros," I am sorry to report, confirms the suspicions of those detractors who have insisted that Disney lacks good taste. Although this 72-minute film has flashes of brilliance in technical innovations and a few sequences of great delight, it is certainly the poorest of his longer pictures. Too often it is just a hodge-podge of color, with design and meaning of no more depth than calendar art. We see good old Donald Duck opening birthday presents from his South and Latin American friends. Some of the gifts are movies like the one that tells the enchanting tale of Pablo, the cold-blooded penguin at the South Pole, whose heart's desire was to go to the land of the sun; others are ordinary travelogue shots; still others are artistic sketches of foreign places and customs, like the lovely series of still paintings of Mexican children celebrating the journey of Mary and Joseph on the nine days before Christmas. No doubt Walt Disney and his staff deserve credit for their mastery of the technical devices that make it possible to show real people dancing with Donald Duck and Joe Carioca, or to show Donald carrying on with bathing beauties at Acapulco Beach. My only comment about these startling innovations at this point is: so what! Here was an opportunity for the Disney Studio to turn out some valuable Latin American material. Instead we have a movie that is remembered for its spectacular fireworks and kaleidoscopic effects. Disney is one of the foremost figures in the history of cinema. What he needs is a guide, a mentor who will show him how to put the children of his brain to good use.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Insurance Companies Look at Social Security

HARVEY LEBRUN

IT IS some time now since the president of the Associated Hospital Service of New York policed insurance companies in that state, as the state's Insurance Commissioner. But he evidently still reads the insurance press assiduously. Or else his background has projected itself into his foreground.

Despite the publisher's blurb about it as a "Beveridge Plan For America," his current book* is a pretty accurate reflection of the concern of insurance company and hospital association spokesmen lest social security in America be effected in ways that might jeopardize their vested interests. The spokesmen for private insurance object to federal supervision of commercial insurance; they disapprove of the Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill; they consider "industrial insurance" a heaven-sent "design for the thrifty poor"; they want to put off—if not put out—the advent of social health insurance and public medical care; they look askance at proposals for the liberalization of the federal old age insurance system and for nationalizing the present hodge-podge of state unemployment insurance provisions. On all these points, Mr. Pink is at one with them. Especially does he agree with them that any further increase in the tasks of the Federal Government "may threaten not only the power and prestige of state and municipal governments, but *the rights and liberties of the people.*"

★

Mr. Pink goes out of his way to express approval of the highly questionable device of "experience rating" in unemployment insurance—that device by which employers like banks, public utilities and insurance companies, whose employment conditions (through no virtue of their management) are relatively stable, are taxed less for unemployment insurance than companies in industries like the building trades, the garment trades, theaters, resort hotels, etc., where employment (through no choice of their management) suffers from seasonal, cyclical or technological factors.

The book falls a bit short of being a systematic treatise on social security. Mr. Pink says nothing about maternity benefits and family allowances and public assistance as elements in the problem of social security. He admits that the low income workers' wages now being siphoned off into industrial insurance would "undoubtedly produce larger benefits under a compulsory plan." His solution of the problem is: "the abolition of poverty through full-time employment and a living wage . . . [to] enable the worker to buy straight life [insurance]."

In the matter of health insurance and medical care, Mr. Pink sings paeons of praise for private hospital associations, insurance companies, group and industrial medical care provisions, etc. He fails to mention, however, that complete health insurance, under the private auspices now generally available, is within the reach only of the highest paid workers; and that fairly complete private, industrial or cooperative medical care provisions are available only to certain types or groups of workers—as in the Kaiser shipyards—or in certain places, such as Washington, D. C., and Los Angeles, California. Even if a white collar worker, common laborer, farmhand, domestic servant, or others of higher or lower economic status, could afford to carry Blue Cross hospital insurance plus commercial medical insurance (partial medical and surgical expense refunds) plus mutual health-and-accident insurance (partial and "limited" wage loss indemnity), they would still be insufficiently protected either to meet the economic losses and the costs of chronic illness or of illness involving major surgery and protracted hospitalization. Nor would they feel free to go to a doctor early enough with potentially dangerous "colds," pains in the side, etc.—let alone going to a good hospital or group clinic for a complete diagnostic check-up, or for extended diagnostic observation (not included in the usual Blue Cross Hospital Insurance).

However, because "private insurance does not and cannot afford adequate protection in that regard," Mr. Pink does approve—with reservations—of universal, compulsory, permanent disability insurance being included in the Federal social security system. And he does favor further study of the problem of adequate medical care and social health insurance. The reason that he gives for such open-mindedness is that, in the past, "We have had a confusion of reports, suggestions, bills, plans, but no authoritative study and blueprint." The volumes of the Committee on the Costs of Medical Care and of the National Resources Planning Board to the contrary notwithstanding. Presumably, a study to end all studies—and all possibility of action in the immediately foreseeable future!

★

The section on social security takes up less than half of the book. The rest is devoted to a discussion of postwar international economic relations—obviously a by-product of Mr. Pink's recent chairmanship of the New York Citizens Conference on International Economic Union. And, since he is the Area Rent Director of the New York Defense Rental Region, he finds it easy to throw in, for good measure, two chapters on housing reform and on some of the housing projects on which insurance companies have invested some of their funds, apparently as one of their contributions to social security. He fails, however, to mention the contribution to social security that the insurance companies made when they foreclosed three billion dollars worth of homes and farms, under distress conditions, during the late depression.

As a whole, the book's chief contribution would seem to be the light it throws on the relationship between Mr. Pink's views on his past and now on his current vocational interests.

*Freedom From Fear—the Interrelation of Domestic and International Programs. Louis H. Pink. Harper. $2.50.

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Collaborationists All

ANNE FREMANTLE

THIS YEAR, the papers facetiously told us, the ground-hog did not see his shadow on the appointed day, and they warned us of sinister consequences for the whole ensuing year. It is Mr. Denis de Rougemont's contention, in his "The Devil's Share" (Pantheon, $2.50) that we are all suffering from the groundhog's misfortune. We fail to perceive the Shadow, the Adversary, "who is always in ourselves." Yet our only hope of overcoming the enemy is first to locate him, where he is: in the armchair where we are sitting. Taking as his text Baudelaire's statement "it is the Devil's cleverest wile to convince us that he does not exist," Mr. de Rougemont insists that there is only one way to victory, "the condition is that we become, each man for himself, a man, a responsible person." To Satan, the Saint is the only "irreducible obstacle" and for Mr. de Rougemont sanctification consists in "the augmenting of our feeling of being accomplices in all the evil which is committed in the world." For him the whole meaning of Christianity is contained "in three essentially tragic acts: taking upon oneself the evil which is in the world, dying with this evil, being resurrected in purity."

That is well said, but as a means of sanctification surely this is not all-inclusive, for the first condition of sanctity is not to take upon oneself the whole evil: the first condition is to accept the whole good, and to know it a gift. Then, only, in and through the Giver, and in so far as He conforms the human soul to His likeness, can one share with Him in His taking upon Himself the evil—first the evil that oneself is and does, and for which there is no cure except through His Redemption. Only after that acceptance, and if He wills that one grow sufficiently, may one be given the grace to share with Him in bearing the sins of the world.

Mr. de Rougemont goes devil-hunting with delightful zest, and one can imagine poor Lucifer puffing out verses from the "Hound of Heaven" as he changes disguise again and again in order to elude the FBI-like vigilance of his latest opponent. Like the girl's lover in the ballad, whom the faery queen changed into serpent, bird, swine and finally "mother-naked man," we are shown the fallen star of the morning as prince of this world, as tempter, accuser, liar, Legion: he is tracked down as the devil in our Gods, in the church; he is discovered as theologian, man-of-the-world, author, democrat, and in numerous other aliases. But above all, Mr. de Rougemont sees him as Vernon Lee described him in her play as: "Satan the Waster of all sorts of virtue. "He is Nothing, but Nothing begets Nothingness, and having fallen from Being he wants Having." But the problem is foreover insoluble. For in order to have and possess, it would be necessary to be, and he is no longer. So, since to create evil is an impossibility, Satan utilizes what exists—all that exists, which, because it is, is good. Neither the devil nor man, Mr. de Rougemont reminds us, can do wrong; we can only do wrongly. We were created by God for God,

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yet the first temptation is to become Gods, and the last, like the first, is always to be good—to a mirage utopia, a good that cannot exist because it is not within the order willed by the Good. Lost in our freedom, we seek above all to escape its consequences, we fly from the continual necessity of exercising that very free-will, of making our choice. Like the children of the most progressive school extant, who clustered weeping round the young teacher on the playground, crying "tell us what to do, please, please; tell us what to do! No more free choice! We are so tired of free choice," we gather into flocks, we seek to lose our responsibility by making it collective, by delegation, by mass-hysteria.

I did not elect the rulers who signed the pact with Hitler at Munich, it was the others; I am not guilty, it was Mr. Chamberlain, it was the umbrella, the woman gave me and I did eat, it was the serpent who beguiled me. Mr. de Rougemont goes on to show how in fleeing from the confession of our faults, from the devil we will not face, we reverse the Gadarene process, and confound ourselves in the anonymity of modern democracy or dictatorship, in ballot-box or barracks. "We all live more and more in a world of collective trance," he writes; "The crowd is not only in the street. It is in the minds of the men of our time."

Having shown Satan as always the Other, the Alibi, in our private lives, Mr. de Rougemont goes on to pursue him in our domestic discords, in our philanthropy and other private virtues, and above all, in love. "The devil's share in love," he tells us, "is simply everything that is not love." For the same process governs our loss of responsibility in love as in life: we were seeking a good, we pursued it beyond the limits assigned to it by the Good; then we had to find excuses for our failure, so we claim "It was inevitable. I'm obsessed, that's that." For the demagogue, the drunkard, the divorcé, the pattern is monotonously the same. Occasionally, however, as even the Buttonmolder admitted to Peer Gynt, sin is a passion: this Mr. de Rougemont explains by saying that then "the infinite desire of the soul suffers from the limitations of an object which resists and which soon inflames it." Proceeding "beyond the limits of disqualified reality and of life which is never sufficiently alive man then throws himself with it into death." That was the tragedy of Judas, loving his image of Christ more than Christ Himself; at another level, it is Tristran or Juliet: "the torturing contradiction suffered by infinite desire seduced and held in check by a finite being can only be solved by escape towards annihilation." But here, it would seem, Mr. de Rougemont does not pursue his own thought far enough: he says, "we can indeed destroy ourselves, but we cannot destroy more than ourselves." But we cannot even do that; no annihilation is possible. Even in Hell, we are part of the divine order, and were the damned removed from Hell (as one legend has it a sentimental female saint once removed them) they would clamor to return, recognizing their place in the cosmic order which their sin could not shake.

This book is a little masterpiece of witty restatements of many truths that we have neglected and forgotten to our peril. It is all the better for saying nothing new, for there is nothing new to say on the subject of sin (as Mr. Coolidge eloquently pointed out!) But how Mr. de Rougemont can write—his wisdom is distilled from experience, not experiment, and of all the admirable sixty-six chapters, perhaps the most wholly excellent is the one on the meaning of words, and of their relation to the Word.

His conclusion is that half our misfortunes come because we have taken the glory out of virtue. Since we are "all involved in evil, all the accomplices of the world's most guilty men," to accuse ourselves without having recourse to Him who forgives is to complete for the devil the work he has begun in us. Since the Fall, the Devil has lost "the sense of continuous creation, of the immanent dynamism of the real, above all, he is ignorant of the drama of Redemption." Mr. de Rougemont goes on to say that "a habit of sin dwells in us, which we might call habitual sin, or almost normal sin . . . but let us avert our eyes and look at Good." Since this is a book about the devil, the author leaves such positive advice to the end, to be as it were, a postscript to his analysis. And, though perhaps it is cavalier to cavil when one cannot but admire and agree so much, it is possible to wish that Mr. de Rougemont had ended on his quotation from Saint Augustine, *"da quod jubes, Domine,"* instead of following it with two lyrical pages on the blue of heaven, which seem rather treacly in translation. After all, it is of no use to oppose to the Devil what Mr. de Rougemont says he does: "all the things of the world whose virtue and splendor are beyond his ken . . . the blue sky of the Ile de France or the smile of a woman whose love is faithful and gay." For there is only one thing with which we can oppose him, and that is the Passion of Christ.

More Books of the Week

The Dream of Descartes. Jacques Maritain. Philosophical. $3.00.

NOBODY has ever given up more of his life to the abstract sciences, including philosophy, than René Descartes. Growing up in the most dashing and pictorial of centuries, that of Richelieu, Mazarin and the Grande Mademoiselle, not to mention Cyrano de Bergerac and the Three Musketeers, he appears to have had with his times only the most tenuous and accidental connection. In attempting to glean something of his personal life, we have been struck by the almost complete absence of picturesque details, except the fact that he appears to have been not unattractive to intellectual women; that masculine convert, Queen Christine of Sweden, studied philosophy with him, in the intervals when she was not gadding about Europe in man's dress, or slaughtering her lovers; and the Princess Louise of the Palatinate, Prince Rupert's odd sister, became a Catholic partly for his sake. But, in general, the beauty of Descartes's life is the beauty of speculative thought; in comparison, that of Pascal (between whom and Descartes, M. Maritain invites his reader to choose), with his relation to the burning Jansenist sect, reads as excitingly as a chapter from the Memoirs of M. Grammont or d'Artagnan.

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In his preface to the present volume of lectures and essays on Descartes, M. Maritain quotes from Etienne Gilson with whom he seems perfectly in accord on the subject. "The Cartesian experiment (in philosophy) was an admirable metaphysical undertaking; and we owe it a great deal, if only for having brilliantly proved that any experiment of that nature is doomed to failure."

The general reader will wish to know just what was "the Cartesian experiment." In so far as we understand it, the experiment was that of Abelard in the twelfth century—an attempt to work out the riddle of life, and also the Christian revelation, by the aid of reason alone. Educated Catholics, of course, will never decry reason, since reason was the principal vehicle both of Aristotle, and his follower, Saint Thomas Aquinas. But educated Catholics, in M. Maritain's words, can now "observe everywhere, even in the economic order, what is produced by the claim of imposing upon matter the rule of a reason which itself refuses to be guided by the highest and most essential realities." We assume that M. Maritain means, by essential realities, the metaphysic of Christianity, as interpreted by Catholic theology; and we must concur that brushing off the latter has been the capital error of all the rationalists from Bacon and Descartes down to Bernard Shaw in our time. However, M. Maritain, in this sympathetic study, written with the slight mysticism but beauty of style we have learned to expect from the author, does not blame Descartes so much for this state of affairs—the modern chaos—as he blames the Cartesians. To them, and their system, he applies the strong word that "Cartesianism has been the great French *sin* in modern History."

CUTHBERT WRIGHT.

A Preface to Logic. Morris R. Cohen. Holt. $2.50.

MR. COHEN finds the fruitfulness of logic in what he calls the "development of limited possibilities." It is regrettable that his book is not meant for the general reader, as the publisher's blurb pretends. For the whole effect of his closely-reasoned and often technical analysis of the relation of logic to such fields of knowledge as natural science, ethics, history and general philosophy is to show that "there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of by the materialists, even assuming their dreams are material."

The logical positivists with their doctrine that logic deals only with linguistic signs take a bad beating. This is worthy of more than merely a specialist's interest. The positivistic teaching that denies the possibility of any ethical and metaphysical science, restricting itself to what is verifiable by sense experience, is found often enough among the general public which has never heard of positivism. The chapter on "Positivism in the Social Sciences" shows concisely that "all people who pretend to be indifferent to considerations of right and wrong actually make judgments of right and wrong, implicitly if not avowedly, and these judgments are not better by reason of their failure to receive explicit critical examination—just as judgments of metaphysics are not sounder because they are unavowed."

Mr. Cohen, although on the side of the Moderns in his interests and knowledge, thus considerably bolsters the position of the Ancients through his criticism of the pretensions of positivism. His contribution, however, is mainly that of a catalyst. His attempts at positive reconstruction fall woefully short, even discounting their

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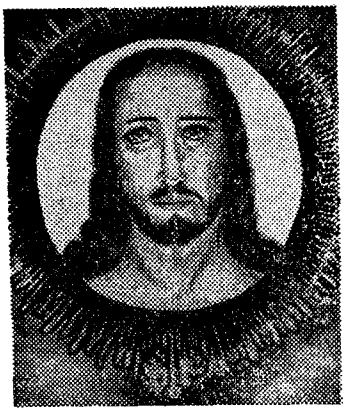

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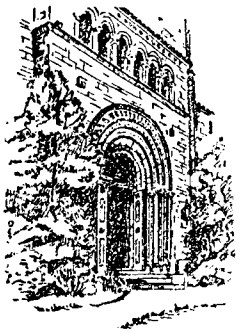

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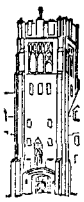

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admittedly fragmentary character, as when he suggests that the need for ethics lies in the fact that "we must integrate all of our desires into one coherent system so that we can attain self-respect." But considered as a catalyst of the inadequate notions of science prevalent in the world today, Mr. Cohen's work proves the truth of his contention that logic can be "a great liberation."

OTTO BIRD.

Home in the West. Harvey Fergusson. Duell. $2.75.

MR. HARVEY FERGUSSON is a novelist of some reputation. He has now yielded to the inner compulsion requiring him to write an autobiography—or at least a partial autobiography, for "Home in the West" really deals only with the formative years of his life, ending with the time of our entry into the last war. The result possesses considerable charm and interest. Since it is an attempt to describe the mould in which Mr. Fergusson, the adult, was cast, its approach is far removed from any mere Wordsworthian recollection of childhood, even though one of the chapters is headed "Clouds of Glory." Rather there is extended analysis of the author's grandparents, who are viewed as forming his inheritance, and this is followed with an account of what he feels helped to shape him in his environment. Naturally the criteria of selection in such cases are subjective, and, as Mr. Fergusson is at pains to point out, his own present memory may warp and distort the real picture. But the attempt genuinely possesses interest, even though it is somehow not altogether convincing.

What we have here, then, are brief memoirs of the author's parents and grandparents, especially of his maternal grandfather, together with self-analysis, recollected in tranquillity, from the years of his first memories to his achievement of manhood, the latter being symbolized by his first sexual experience. The scene of Mr. Fergusson's youth is the Southwest, where he acquired the most genuine of the characteristics he attributes to himself—a love of the American outdoors and especially of mountains. His recollections of this section of the country alone give his book a certain value as a social document. The experiment he attempts cannot be described as wholly successful, yet many an introspective reader will find it worth his attention.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

Notes on Art for Catholics. Charlton Fortune. Saint Anthony. $1.00.

ANYONE given to writing on art knows how difficult it is to do what Charlton Fortune has accomplished so successfully in this book. Few people wilfully seek to be obscure in writing, but art, like most technical subjects, has many words usual to it that are meaningless to the uninitiated. The author has succeeded in eliminating these from her text, to a large extent, and the book is notable for its information on how to view art, and for its literary clarity. It is extremely well written and this versatile artist and author is to be congratulated on doing a much needed job and in a happy manner.

The illustrations, as well as the text, are based on the museum collection in the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery in Kansas City. A wider choice than this single collection would have permitted a more uniformly interesting series of reproductions, but that was not a matter in the author's control. Her comments on the art works are very much to the point and it will be unfortunate

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if the title of the book keeps it out of the hands of non-Catholics. People of any belief could read it to their cultural advantage and I am happy to recommend it to all those desirous of a better understanding of art.

Given a patron as sympathetic as Bishop O'Hara, who is responsible for bringing out the book, and one of the greater museum collections of the country, Charlton Fortune could produce an even better book. To do so would be to further the work so auspiciously started by "Notes on Art for Catholics," which should be one of many books like it. It does the work not only of associating Catholics with the cultural advantages of our communities, but also of making us more definitely aware, that while we may have fallen low, our artistic estate was once a high one. The project or a similar book on the great collection of Catholic art in the Metropolitan Museum should appeal to the generosity of some art-minded sponsor.

BARRY BYRNE.

Mozart—His Character, His Work. Alfred Einstein. Oxford. $5.00.

MR. EINSTEIN has added to the extensive literature on Mozart a critical rather than a narrative type of biography. He examines various phases of the composer's character and works and discusses the events of his life, not in chronological sequence, but according to the characteristics they illustrate.

The first chapter, "The Traveler," reveals the wanderlust that prevented Mozart from ever settling for long in any one place. Even when he lived his last years in Vienna he moved restlessly from apartment to apartment. "Genius and Human Frailty" is an analysis of the flaws that inevitably balance creative brilliance, while "Mozart and the Eternal Feminine" shows the composer's relationships with his early loves and with his wife, Constanze Weber. Einstein's careful research proves beyond question that Mozart was more often the victim of malicious gossip and intrigue than a philanderer.

"Catholicism and Freemasonry" complete the first section of the book. The second section deals with "The Musician" and describes Mozart's process of creation, his use of counterpoint and his choice of keys. The balance of the work, more than 300 pages, is devoted to Mozart's compositions: the instrumental works, vocal music, and operas. These chapters are followed by a catalogue of works and an index. All in all, Mr. Einstein's volume is a notable addition to Mozart literature.

JOHN TASKER HOWARD.

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Next Week

KEY TO FOREIGN POLICY, by Harry Lorin Binsse, comes directly to grips with the reasons for America's current ineffectuality in foreign affairs. Despite our impressive armed might, unparalleled industrial production, financial strength and resources for aiding other nations in postwar reconstruction, there is little evidence that the United States has been able to realize our basic political aims. Mr. Binsse gives the chief reasons for our inferiority in this vital sphere and suggests how this disturbing situation could be remedied. Of paramount importance to every American seriously concerned over the issue of this war.

RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA, by Helen Iswolsky, is a factual survey of the recent changes in Soviet religious policy. It includes quotations from the Patriarch which several years ago would have been considered genuinely astounding. The information embodied in this article by a noted Russian author and lecturer is invaluable for understanding the prospects for religion in postwar Europe.

FORBIDDEN TO MARRY, by Iris B. Buaken, deals with California barriers to marriage with Filipinos. It tells how Chaplain Eugene C. Noury, O.M.I., of the First Filipino Infantry, and other priests have fought this legislation. And by arranging trips to New Mexico (made possible by Army furloughs) how they succeeded in legalizing religious marriages which they had performed. The article will include both Church and state marriage laws as irrefutable documentation.

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